

PAC GENERAL MEETING
January 20th, 2010

Executive in Attendance: Nandita Narayan, Siva Ramesh, Keith Chong, Shannon Derksen, Lynne Vidler, Zena Kwan. Ann Einstein

Regrets: Rhylin Bailie, Denise Hayhurst, Abby Wong, Jen Mezei

Meeting called to order at 7:04 pm

- **Approval of November General Meeting minutes:** Lynne Vidler firsts, Zena Kwan seconds – motion passed.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT – Nandita Narayan

- Thank-you to the executive for their hard work over the last few months.
- Mad Science sessions are full – 22 kids registered and many on the waiting list. There is interest in a second session in spring. Keith is looking into a second session; however finding space to hold this session may be a challenge.
- Fundraising
 - This is a touchy subject and some parents unhappy with extra fundraising. The PAC is doing extra fundraising because there was a \$5000 cut by the government to PAC Gaming budget.
 - Nandita wants to roll out a new type of program, which is in the discussion phase at the moment – Partners in Education. This program could help fund new playground equipment, new technology for the school and much more. Through this program we would develop a relationship with corporations and community leaders. Opportunities would be given to our partners to act as mentors to kids at Seaforth. They could talk about career opportunities in their area. In return we would give our partners some attention on our websites, etc.
 - **Nandita needs a team of people to work on this with her. In the next newsletter she will request volunteers – Keith suggested doing a focus group with potential educational partners. Need 5 or 6 parents to sit on the committee they can give structure to the idea and solicit partners.**
 - Government won't give us the cut money back (\$5000) so we can't stop fundraising.
 - Comment from a parent in the audience: great idea! Question: how we are doing with donation program? How much was raised, participation rate? Can we go a second time to parents? Answer: a reminder did go out, then Christmas came, other fundraising programs came up. A few parents are frustrated, so second round may be inappropriate.

- Comment: but if the donations are down then fundraising will have to take its place – parents need to understand this. Perhaps if given a choice between fundraising or just working with less money per child some may realize.
- Comment: we don't want to sound like we are forcing children to fundraise, because that is not the intention at all. Private schools do mandatory fundraising.
- PAC will send out a second request for donations in February. Comment — second donations never bring in very much.
- Need to evoke response get those in objection to fundraising out to meetings.
- When making the second request for donations we need to make it clear that- due to government decreasing our Gaming budget by \$5000, we have to fundraise. Spreading this word repeatedly to other parents will help create understanding.
- Alternative fundraising programs are being explored – Partners in Education.
- Question: did we make more the year we said the money will go directly to YOUR child's classroom? No one recalls. Keith: Primary had more money than Intermediate children. Teachers were unhappy with inequity. Idea: 50% goes to child's classroom; 50% goes to the whole school.
- We, the PAC members that participate in meetings, need to spread the word and advocate for the fundraising to ensure our kids have everything they need.
- Comment/Concern: are new volunteers ever turned away or given only certain jobs? Answer: no, this is not the case. Chair Nandita Narayan would like to encourage anyone that wants to volunteer to please come forward, we would be happy to have you!
- Gift cards – the profit could be higher next time rounds. Perhaps we gave too short notice this time round. If this became a regular thing and if we announce it earlier we may do better. Right before Christmas is perfect. November is ideal – when you purchase one of these gift cards you are buying something that you will definitely use.

VICE-CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT – Lynne Vidler

- Apologies for no speaker this meeting. *How to talk to your kids about money* was the topic to be presented; however the speaker fell through and didn't respond in time.
- February's parent presentation: Raising Confident Boys & Girls. Information about the differences in learning styles between boys and girls, role models for boys and girls. IT will be the same two speakers we had in November 2009 (on *How to Support your Child's Learning*).
- March/April PAC meetings – parent speakers - possible upcoming topics:
 - Another bullying presentation this time from a different perspective (victim perspective).
 - How to talk to kids about money
 - Raising Healthy Children.
- April 12th (tentatively) – Brock Tully will give a presentation about happiness. Brock is a well-received motivational speaker.
- May PAC meeting – parent speaker topic – Alcohol and drug awareness
- Lynne would appreciate any additional ideas and feedback about parent speaker topics.

TREASURER'S REPORT – Nandita Narayan for Abby Wong

As of December 31, 2009, our General Operating account balance is \$20,065.64 and Gaming Fund account balance is \$2,790.81. No transaction for the Gaming Account during December. The November and December bank reconciliations for both accounts are attached for your review.

We received donations totaling \$8,825 as of January 11, 2010. Money will be distributed to each class shortly. Mrs. Dick has forwarded the information to the school district to have the donation receipts prepared for 2009.

Popcorn sales were \$463.28 in November and \$356.35 in December. An average of \$117 per Friday.

Gift card sales in early December was \$13,479.50 with a profit of \$508.99.

In December the book fair sales was over \$5,100 and raised \$1,929 for the library. The sales was almost double of the one in September.

Movie night on Dec 4 was a huge success. We made \$570.60 in donations and \$999.35 in food sales. We made a net profit of \$1,259.51.

Grade 7 spirit wear sales was \$2,338 and cost \$1,602.46 with a profit of \$735.54.

Mug sales was \$200 (40 mugs). We have ordered 108 mugs. The extras are available for sale during future events and for promotional use.

The safety patrol pizza party in December costed \$484.05.

No information has been received for snack sales yet.

Gaming Fund audit is now completed. Only a couple of minor exceptions found and they have been rectified.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT – Keith Chong

- Intermediate parents – your children will be part of reading programs going on right now – Battle of the books – reach for the top type contest. Kids read specific novels and compete against other schools, winners move on to another stage. French students will be involved in Lever Mania. Next couple weeks this will be going on.
- Spirit Day – April 30th
 - Essentially a student conference: over 100 sessions that kids sign up for. Session topics are varied, range from making pottery, making jewelry, provincial court judge talking about her job, whitecaps members doing soccer clinics, badminton, martial arts, anti-bullying, investments/stock markets.
 - Spirit day is divided into 3 sessions, depending on age of child, older students – 3 sessions in 1 day. Younger child's choices are restricted. **NEED presenters – if parents know someone or themselves that can present – age group targeted, number of kids will work with (flexible) PAC and school funds the materials for the presentation.**
 - Feedback from last years – kids really enjoy it! Students are looking for new presentations, because Spirit day has been done for a few years now. Volunteer basis,

we can't hire people. BCTV has come in the past. One area in particular is sessions for primary students – 1 hour long session.

- Newsletter will have presenter's form attached. Tick off times that suit you. Don't have to do 3 in the day. 1 in the AM or PM is fine.

- FSA Tests – Foundation Skills Assessment

- All grade's 4 and 7 do this each year. Last week parents might have got 1 of 3 pamphlets from teacher's union – giving their side of the arguments and asking parents to veto these tests. Other side – Ministry may be advertising (TV) that these tests are very important and children should be writing. The newspaper will publish the rankings in the newspaper on how the schools perform from year to year. A lot of this is very political.
- Seaforth has no choice but to give students the opportunity to write – many parents call Keith looking for schools that do well on FSAs. Other parents are concerned with our ranking – how come Seaforth's scores are dropping?
- Keith wants to explain to parents how schools are scored on the FSA. Theoretically all students are to write – we can excuse certain students (ESL level 1 and 2, special needs). In the past, these excluded students were never included in calculation of FSA scores. Then a couple years ago, since parents and teachers were pulling out students from writing (political action) – now government has decided the students that choose not to write and have no valid excuse will get a zero. The average drops for these schools. The average drops if you have a lot of ESL and special needs students. This has been happening for 2 years now. Seaforth's scores may be dropping because of this change in scoring. The FSA were also supposed to be written in May to reflect learning accomplished. However, this year FSA start in January and end in February – their learning isn't fully evolved and evaluating at this point may result in lower scores – this may also explain the drop in Seaforth's scores.
- Question: how did Seaforth do last year on the FSAs? Answer: website shows how we did. Grade 6 and 7 above average, grade 4 did well as well.
- Question – why are kids writing FSA tests earlier? Answer: to feed into curriculum planning next year.
- Also scores can be lower depending on the student's state on the day of the test. Part of the test is administered electronically – they are answering on the computer. This can be difficult. Some teachers, based on their personal/political views, don't give students time during class time to practice FSA tests. In December Keith sent information in the newsletter on how to practice for the FSA using link on Seaforth's website. PEN # needed to access practice test.
- Question: Why are these tests not adjusted for public versus private Schools? The Fraser institute made these tests, not the government. This is a very conservative organization that may think private schooling is better, thus tests may be designed to show that private does better.
- Question/Comment: given that we have an online practice version and that our kids are very technology savvy – do we really need to be that worried? Keith – you wouldn't think we should worry, but participation is dropping – parents are not having their children write. Teacher preparation is still varied – this can mean scores drop.
- Question: what is the participation rate at Seaforth? Answer: over 90%. Don't know if this will drop or rise. Last year we publicized the time and date of the test – parents

- made sure kids not present at that time. When parents get the results back the computer sheet shows achievement – a copy is kept in the student file and moves along with the student when they go to high school.
- Question: can the government not make a better test? The government tried to do this (Basic skills test) – but the standard was calculated such that it was not relevant to all children. Income, race, geographic area, experience level, etc. etc. meant varied scores resulting from a standardized government test.
 - Registration for 2010/2011 - In February 2010, all month parents can register their kids. No line up necessary. Anticipate school will be in high demand still. If miss this deadline, the application goes to the bottom of list – whether you live in the catchment area or not.
 - All-day Kindergarten
 - Ministry has allotted 887 spaces in Burnaby for all-day Kindergarten. Prior to this announcement, District prioritized Burnaby schools as to whether they should get all-day. One criteria – student composition – high number of aboriginal, ESL, special needs means they got a higher priority for getting all-day. Those with existing space for an all-day kindergarten class were also given higher priority.
 - Out of 41 schools in the District, Seaforth is the 41st in ranking. We will not get all-day kindergarten in 2010/2011. 24 of 41 schools have been designated to have all-day. The closest school to Seaforth that will have it is Cameron (Stoney Creek doesn't have all-day in 2010/2011). If in French, have to go to West Ridge to get all-day.
 - Question – will the schools that have all-day kindergarten change every year? Answer: no it's a 2 year phase-in approach. By the 2nd year all schools should have all-day kindergarten. Remember the criteria – those schools without space for all-day kindergarten – a capital cost is involved – government has not identified any funding for building/portable placement. We are slated to have all-day in September 2011/2012 – but this is not for sure. We could even have an election between now and then.
 - Question – will parents have a choice of ½ day and full-day? Answer: no there is no choice; if the school offers all-day the children that attend that school must do all-day. Some parents are concerned – my child is not ready – those parents can take their children to another school.
 - Question – is kindergarten optional? Answer: Yes, a parent may choose to enroll their child in grade 1 and forgo kindergarten.
 - Question: are both our portables in use right now? Answer: Yes - ESL/Resource + gifted program in each.
 - Question: does the recent lay off of 800 teachers in the Vancouver School District have anything to do with all-day kindergarten implementation? Answer: no this was done to help mitigate their deficit. Burnaby deficit next year \$8 million – not decided where cuts will be. April 2010 is when we will know what cuts will be. There will be meetings between now and then that parents can attend to have input into what the cuts will be. Keith advises parents to check out district website for meeting information.

VOLUNTEER CO-ORDINATOR/MEMBER-AT-LARGE - Zena Kwan

- Carnival committee – Zena heading committee: – first meeting last week, need lots of volunteers, start coming to parents and school after spirit day, heads up. Don't want to interfere with spirit. Day of volunteers needed. Nandita to put in PAC newsletter. 5 co-coordinators so far. Rides, games (2006 there was some – rainy day, not successful) but rides in 2010 – draw in people.

CPF REPORT – Siva Ramesh

- Madame Sharples – organizing a carnival. Hoping to have funding for this – Siva to email Nandita if they get funding.

DPCP REPORT – Nandita Narayan for Jen Mezei

- DPAC (no rep tonight) – announcement – February 10th: holding a parent education seminar meaningful consultation 7pm 4041 Canada Way – DPAC website will have location info

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE – Keith Chong

- May 7th, 2010 – there will be a run through a disaster scenario. Last fall 2009 Seaforth was busy stocking the shipping container with medical suppliers, lights, batteries for the night, large tarps to cover the primary playground– to use as a shelter, etc. On May 7th stations to be set up – Earthquake drill held – and we will go through process of phoning families to pick up their child.

HOT LUNCH COMMITTEE - Rishma Vallani

- Nothing new to report.

TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMITTEE - Donna Binotto & Fariborz Joulani

- No one present.

HEALTH & NUTRITION COMMITTEE - Adrienne Dall'Antonia

- Not present.

Meeting adjourned ~8:30 pm